

The ROXBURY CHRONICLE

A NEWSLETTER WRITTEN BY AND FOR THE STUDENTS
OF ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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RCC STUDENTS AND THEIR FINANCIAL AID CONCERNS

by

Sofiya Dobromyslova

There are more than 2,400 students who attend RCC and about 63% of them receive the Financial Aid from the Federal and State authorities. So, approximately 1,500 RCC students are worrying about Financial Laws which allegedly have undergone some changes.

The *Roxbury Chronicle* asked the Director of the Financial Aid, Mr. Jim Yong, to explain these changes.

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**THE ROXBURY CHRONICLE IS PRODUCED BY THE STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN ENG 251--JOURNALISM I:**

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Yong was so kind as to agree to dispel students' anxiety about how they can afford to pay their tuition bills. At first, Yong said that the financial Aid laws undergo changes every six years because of changes in the federal budget. Then he said that the main changes concern the way of applying for the Financial Aid. It means that from now this process will be both fully electronic and by paper. That will add more work for the Financial Aid Department. They hope this process of applying and distribution might be quicker. But for students, the way of an applying process remains the same.

Yong also expects that the maximum Pell Grant in the year 1999-2000 will be about \$3,175. It is an increase of \$175 more than it was last year. The Financial Aid from the State of Massachusetts to RCC will be an increase of \$800,000 from last year. Yong is glad that a little more money will allow them to be more flexible while distributing the Financial Aid among RCC students. They, as usual, put their attention on community activities, like giving more money for work study.

Next, Yong goes on with answering our questions. "Students, who were not eligible to get the Financial Aid last year, due to lack of institutional funding, are eligible now because of increase funding from the Federal and State Governments." It means that more RCC students will receive Financial Aid.

Yong also adds that RCC fully covers education expenses of 92% of eligible RCC students and only 8% are covered partially for the current semester.

Then we asked his opinion, "What is the role of the Financial Aid Department in the whole educational process?" Yong answered with a boyish smile. "If you compare the whole system of administration of RCC with the modern automobile, then the service of the Financial Aid Department is as an air conditioning in that automobile." In other words, Financial Aid along with other RCC services help RCC students feel more comfortable on the path of getting education. We liked this comparison.

Jim Yong is an affable person. He always explains RCC students their opportunities. Furthermore, Yong is a director of the first of the Student Financial Aid workshops which have been held from October to December 1998, in room 300 of the Student Center. At these seminars, he speaks about the application process, some awards and different kinds of disbursements.

In conclusion, *Roxbury Chronicle* showed an interest in "What is your opinion? What are the facts that might influence increasing the students' population at RCC?" Yong believes that more advertisements, more educational programs, with increasing in Financial Aid may attract people to attain their goals.

RCC Library and RCC Students' Dreams

by

Sofiya Dobromyslova

It is true that a book is a source of knowledge. And it is no mere chance that expansion of library books was one of the RCC students demands to the college administration on May 8, 1998. According to Student Government President Jean-Brice Dickens, "It was a failure for the administration to see problems like books in the library" (Williams, *Roxbury Chronicle* Vol. I, Number 1, November 1998).

Definitely, the issue of library books concerns RCC students as well as their professors because the success in studying directly depends on how easy a student can get the particular book.

At the start, the *Roxbury Chronicle* acquainted itself with the October 26th, 1998 "Library Update" letter by Timothy D. DiPace, Director of the RCC Library, where DiPace notes that, "Many of you did not have the opportunity to attend the Library's open house in September and receive an update on library staffing, services and operations." And further, "Automation is always on our mind. We continue to be the only Community College that does not have an on-line public access catalog (OPAC)." Then he says, "Internet Service within the library is a relatively new operation... Although our installation did not originally include downloading capabilities...we anticipate installation sometime in November." He also says, "We believe an open communication process is a key factor in the success of the Library." So, the *Roxbury Chronicle* came to Mr. DiPace for advice on how to improve the present situation in the library.

Timothy was so kind as to provide a special tour through the library and its collections. He told us about the installation of the additional two Internet stations (i.e. now four stations in all). He also stated to the *Roxbury Chronicle* that the Library was investigating the development of a Home Web page for RCC's Library on the Internet. In reference to our current Internet capabilities and the use of the Library's other automated resources (i.e. SIRS, Proquest, Boston Globe/Newsbank) we discussed the need to develop guides to assist students in the use of these specific indexing services. In addition, the scheduling of weekly workshops for RCC students on the use of these resources was noted.

The Director also expects that RCC students will be excited about the availability of new databases, which should be accessible in the Spring Semester. These are subscription services (i.e. EBSCO and IAC databases, etc) that will be available through our Internet connection.

By the way, while the director conducted us through the library, we unfortunately noted students, who drank, ate, made a lot of noise inside the library. Frankly, it is not proper for adults to behave as little kids. Definitely, in the whole world the library is

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considered to be the Temple of Knowledge. And, as it is at the Church, Temple, Mosque nobody will disrespect brothers and sisters by being noisy, eating, and drinking, as well as at the library, nobody should do it.

The *Roxbury Chronicle* hopes that the Director's expectations come true, and RCC students will continue to enjoy and use their library during the upcoming Spring Semester.

Big Business at RCC

by

Rosemary Hurley

The Business Club at Roxbury Community College has been in existence since 1996. They meet every Thursday morning from 11:00 to 12:00. Professor W. Silva is the Business Club Advisor, and Ernest Mauresthene is the group's president, and he has a long list of responsibilities to work with Roxbury students.

The Business Club is one of the most active clubs on campus. The Business Club has held panel discussions, had guest speakers and numerous events. They bring in experts to speak with students on jobs and career. In addition to that, the speakers have talked about empowerment and home buying. They also have inroads presentations. The Business Club also has field trips. The trips are very important. They groomed the students and trained them for job interviews and career oriented jobs. They will be taking a trip at the end of April to New York City to visit the Stock Exchange. In addition to being educational, the trips are also a fun time.

The Business Club has been able to do what it's done because it is affiliated with a National Black Organization called NABA. Professor Silva is representing an NBA Conference.

It's important for students to get involved and support your school.

Is Dunkin' Donuts a Real Filler-Upper?

by

Keita S. Fennick

The *Roxbury Chronicle* has been doing a study at the new Dunkin Donuts at RCC and we have interviewed many people on their views of the cafe.

Before there was a Dunkin Donuts, there were two cafes in the Student Center. Both cafes went out of business due to the lack of customers.

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Dunkin Donuts continued from previous page

Before the Dunkin Donuts came to RCC, the RCC staff did a deal with Fort Hill Pizza to sell food in the Academic Building. A lot of students had adapted to the new and limited Fort Hill Pizza.

Derek Hall, a student at RCC says, "I'm paying my money to attend this school, and I can't get any fair treatment. There is no cafe and every cafe that comes in the school eventually leaves out due to unknown situations."

Stacey Opeal, a student at RCC, states, "Those donuts cannot fill me up. Why couldn't they put in a Boston Chicken or a Pizza Hut there? It's just like a person depending on sweets to give them energy when they're ready to go to work."

Anthony Rich, a business major at RCC, says, "These donuts don't give me the munchies. I feel this place takes advantage of students when it can."

Marie Knight, a student at RCC says, "It's a nice place to get breakfast, but you can't have lunch. I mean," Knight continues, "come on now. A bagel is like the only thing in the cafe that can give you a little strength."

Many students do not know that the Dunkin Donuts does offer a variety of sandwiches, although they are served on breakfast breads.

The *Roxbury Chronicle* has done a study of the school's cafeteria situation. It seems that the Dunkin Donuts disappoints most of the students. More meats and more varieties of food are what the students want and what they must have.

A Dunkin Donuts employee who wishes to remain anonymous says, "This is not a concern of me. I just work here and get paid."

If this cafe wants to stay in business, they're going to have to live up the students needs. The *Chronicle* has never known of any company to stay in business without the help of their customers. No one really knows how long the Dunkin Donuts at RCC will stay in business.



OPINION

Stereotypes at Roxbury Community College

by
Freddie Williams

No one likes to be deprived of their individuality, but that is exactly what we do when we stereotype others. Although some types of stereotypes may seem fairly harmless, all stereotypes make it harder for us to see the people around us as individuals. The worst stereotypes are the ones we do not recognize as stereotypes, but accept as fact. We assume, for example, that all people in wheelchairs are helpless and that all elderly people are so hard of hearing we have to shout when we speak to them. Obviously generalizations such as these affect our behavior toward others. Some stereotypes are dangerous. All of them prevent us from understanding and respecting the differences in the people around us.

Probably the most common stereotypes are based on physical characteristics, by our height, our weight, the way we walk, talk and dress. Even the way we respond to discussion, and comments, that people make in the class room is based on stereotypes. We try to send subliminal messages across the room. The second most common type of stereotype is based on lifestyle, this includes personal interests and career. If you are stereotyped a "thug," you can not be a good student or if you smoke too much "herb," you can't read. If you are a "brain," you are stereotyped as being a nerd or someone who cannot be much fun. If you are a lawyer, you are not to be trusted. If you are a factory worker, you move your lips when you read. If you live in the inner city, you are on welfare. If you live in the suburbs, you are a racist Republican. At their worst, stereotypes like these result in hatred, prejudice and discrimination. Stereotyping people keeps us apart, suspicious and separate and prevents us from trying to understand each other.

The worst prejudice results from a third form of stereotype, the sort based on a person's race or ethnic background. Entire Nations of Native Americans were eradicated when the Europeans came to the New World. Africans were enslaved for centuries because they were considered "uncivilized" or "heathen." Hitler utilized negative stereotypes of Jews to justify their extermination. Unfortunately, such stereotypes and prejudice are still with us today, passed on from generation to generation.

Because of our race, ethnicity, nationality, sex or religion, some people will

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perceive others as being "not as good" as "we" are. This kind of thinking has done serious psychological harm to individuals of all backgrounds. It has weakened our society as a whole. Stereotypes are the product of ignorance and result of limited knowledge. We see people as stereotypes instead of as individuals because we do not really know much about the person or groups they belong to. A country founded on respect and tolerance for differences should celebrate, not fear, diversity among its citizens.

So students of Roxbury, including staff, let ignorance be in circumference of your home and "Don't Bring it" to Roxbury College.

If There Are no Gods, How Did the Universe Get Here?

by Sheng Huey Yu

All religions have myths and stories which attempt to answer this question. In ancient times, when simple people did not know, such myths were adequate, but in the 20th century, in the age of physics, astronomy and geology, such myths have been superseded by scientific fact. Science has explained the origin of the universe without recourse to the god-idea.

WHAT DOES THE BUDDHA SAY ABOUT THE GOD IDEA?

It is interesting that the Buddha's explanation of the origin of the universe corresponds very closely to the scientific view. In the *Aganna Sutta*, the Buddha describes the universe being destroyed and then re-evolving into its present form over a period of countless millions of years. The first life formed on the surface of the water and again, over countless millions of years evolved from simple into complex organisms. All these processes are without beginning or end, and are set in motion by natural causes.

IF THERE IS NO EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD, WHAT ABOUT MIRACLES?

There are many who believe that miracles are proof of God's existence. We hear wild claims that healing has taken place but we never get an independent testimony from a medical office or a surgeon. We hear second hand reports that someone was miraculously saved from disaster, but we never get an eye witness account of what is supposed to have happened. We hear rumors that prayer straightened a diseased body or strengthened a withered limb, but we never see X-rays or get comments from doctors or nurses. Wild claims, second hand reports and rumors are no substitute for solid evidence and solid evidence of miracles is very rare. However, sometimes unexplained things do happen. Unexpected events do occur. But our inability to explain such things does not prove the existence of gods. It only proves that our knowledge is as yet incomplete.

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Before the development of modern medicine, when people didn't know what caused sickness people believed that God or the gods sent diseases as a punishment. Now we know what causes such things and when we get sick, we take medicine. In time when our knowledge of the world is more complete, we will be able to understand what causes unexplained phenomena, just as we can now understand what causes disease.

MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE IN SOME FORM OF GOD; IT MUST BE TRUE

Not so. There was a time when everyone believed that the world was flat, but they were all wrong. The number of people who believe in an idea is not measure of the truth or falsehood of that idea. The only way we can tell whether an idea is true or not is by looking at the facts and examining the evidence.

IF BUDDHISTS DON'T BELIEVE IN GODS, WHAT DO WE BELIEVE IN?

We don't believe in a god because we believe in man. We believe that each human being is precious and important, that all have the potential to develop into a Buddha, a perfected human being. We believe that human beings can outgrow ignorance and irrationality and see things as they really are. We believe that hatred, anger, spite and jealousy can be replaced by love, patience, generosity and kindness. We believe that all this is within the grasp of each person if they make the effort, guided and supported by fellow Buddhists and inspired by the example of the Buddha. As the Buddha says:

"No one saves us but ourselves,
No one can and no one may
We ourselves must walk the path
But Buddha's clearly show the way."

Alcoholic Drinks

by Sheng Huey Yu

This is the most dangerous form of pleasure discovered by man.

Some people say that alcohol is very essential to the human body. Human beings only need the drug of alcohol in abnormal conditions. Whether mental or physical, no man, as long as he is in a normal condition will need it: even moderate drinking in many cases leads on to habitual drunkenness, the evil and harmful effects of which nobody will deny. Some people start taking alcohol in order to get rid of certain sicknesses and worries, but inadvertently they become drunkards: and to justify their drinking, they pretend that they are sick. This is the most dangerous habit that man has concocted in order to satisfy his vulgar form of pleasure. It is therefore most advisable for everybody, especially for the weak-minded to abstain absolutely from alcoholic drinks. Its harmfulness to a man of normal health is firmly proved by medical scientists. Its effects on a weak person would be more serious. Those who drink in order to forget worries unintentionally invite more worries.

FEATURES

Students' concerns over the safety of flight

by
Sofiya Dobromyslova

News about the crashes of the airliners (for example, Swiss Air, TWA) spread through the RCC students, faculty and staff and make them be worried.

At the outset, however, the *Roxbury Chronicle* is curious to know, "Why does the airplane, which is heavier than air, fly?" What kind of forces keep the airplane high up in the air?" With this in mind, we looked into the books and learned that the force, called lifting capacity, arises in case when the air flows around the plane's wings with a huge speed. It causes the pressure on the surface to be less above the wing rather than under the wing. The difference between these two pressures creates the force, which compensates the plane's weight and keeps the air moving airplane high up in the air.

Then, the *Roxbury Chronicle* assumes that on one hand, students don't want to rush into the next world, thanks to a plane crash. On the other hand, the students are always in a hurry.

So, the *Roxbury Chronicle* is interested in how RCC students, dealing with fear, solve the problem to be safe and to be on time at the place where they have to be.

Frankly, people fight the fear of flying in different ways. It might be drugs, alcohol, reading, talking, sleeping, looking out the window and so on. Some of these ways are healthy, others are not healthy.

We asked RCC professor of psychology Dr. Royal C. Tucker about his opinion of how people should handle their fears of flying. The professor smiled kindly, thought for a while, and then suggested, "To handle any fears the person should precisely visualize the whole process and think that all will be OK. In other words, try to form in your mind a picture of flying and yourself in this process with a positive perspective and hopefully your fear dissipates." We liked this advice; we will try it.

After that, we conducted a survey of 32 students and staff and let them express their feelings about the safety of lights.

The people surveyed are between 18-68 years old. They came to RCC from the whole world. They like Boston. Some of them miss their families, but they try to do their best to improve their knowledge.

Survey on the safety of flight

How often do you fly?

Often: 56%

Seldom: 44%

Do you have to fly?

Yes: 41%

No: 59%

Are you afraid to fly?

Yes: 59%

No: 41%

What air company do you prefer?

It depends: 34%

Delta: 16%

American: 34%

Swiss Air: 7%

Lufthansa: 3%

Aeroflot: 3%

Jamaica: 3%



What influences your choice?

Safety: 59%

Price: 34%

Convenience: 7%

If you have a choice, what kind of transportation do you prefer?

Train: 38%

Plane: 31%

Car: 22%

Bus: 9%

In your opinion, what steps should be made to increase safety of flight?

Modern control devices installed on airplanes: 63%

Increase security measures: 9%

Don't know: 18%

Improve job conditions for pilots: 3%

Increase pilots' skill: 7%

How old are you?

18-29: 46%

30-39: 7%

40-49: 7%

50-59: 16%

60-up: 23%

Stress Busters

by Rosemary Hurley

How do students at Roxbury Community College handle stress? What causes stress, and what are the symptoms of stress?

Stress is very serious in our culture due to many reasons. Doctors' research shows that stress affects every human being's life. It has no classification of age. Stress affects people in management lives of their career, adolescents, babies, as well as adults. These changes are due to adjusting to this society.

The symptoms of stress include fatigue, headache, trauma and events that take over a person's lifestyle. For example, news of tragedy, overwhelmed in college from taking exams.

During the holidays working people, students have a heavy burden or a responsibility to enjoy their holidays. Shopping during the holidays, writing holiday cards to friends, trying to find a job to pay bills to have a nice holiday is a big, stressful event in people's lives. The students at Roxbury Community College have this to say about their stress. And hope someone will come forward to have a positive solution to support these people to have a productive lifestyle.

I have interviewed three students at Roxbury Community College. Charles Cherisme, Jr feels stress and it affects him during the holidays due to being overworked and putting bills aside during the holidays. He feels fatigue, lack of sleep due to studying and working.

Alicia Salomon is stressed because she has no money to buy Christmas presents. She is now looking for a part time job. Business finals for college have put her in a stressful way to try to make her holidays a success.

Corey Abbot is stressed from overwork in college doing term papers and preparing for finals. This has affected him financially to buy gifts for his parents and friends. He is looking for a job. Corey is looking for a brighter day in his life.

We at the *Roxbury Chronicle* are also dealing with stress during the end of the semester/Christmas crunch. Sofiya has found the season sad and stern in her holiday actions. She's had so many articles to write for her Journalism class, and she wrote three programs for Internet Class. She celebrated her sister-in-law's birthday over Thanksgiving. She's sad that she couldn't read more for her history class due to lack of time.

Freddie has stress as a student. To him, much is found over the holidays. The finals, himself not pursuing his school work, taking care of college deadlines at the last

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minute. Freddie feels that what stress is to him is when people complain about too much work and find themselves not competitive due to the fact other people's negatives causes a few to be a failure. Also, he hates taking garbage from everyone.

How to Beat Stress and Take Charge of Your Life

by Rosemary Hurley

For the internal purpose of healing, they sell all types of natural herbal, oils and relaxing teas at any drug store, or nature stores across the land. Meditation and relaxation practices can heal you and put your life in order.

Steve Sullivan, an associate sales rep at Macy's in downtown Boston, suggested the following twelve day plan to work at relieving stress.

- DAY ONE: Use aroma therapy oils.
- DAY TWO: Use Homedics Matt Massages and in fractured flex heat Massager.
- DAY THREE: Use Homedics Foot Pleaser.
- DAY FOUR: Use Alma Pals Beanie Animals
- DAY FIVE: Use Homedics Back Therapist
- DAY SIX: Use Christmas Potpourri
- DAY SEVEN: Use Masada Bath Sets
- DAY EIGHT: Use Homedics with Aroma Spa with aromatic beads and Sound Spa
- DAY NINE: Use Cafe Aroma Little Mug
- DAY TEN: Use Homedics Therapeutic Soaps
- DAY ELEVEN: Use Gourmet Glass Candle Set
- DAY TWELVE: Use Homedics Bubble Bath Foot Spa

Finally to wrap up a stressful life for the next century for business managers and for children, the Homedics System, designed for all ages, will reduce stress and reduce the cost of medical bills. Eat healthy, and the stress will disappear.

RCC VOICES

FICTION-POETRY-ESSAYS

Taken With Fall's Fascination

by Efim Miller

Silence and charm.

Sunny-late autumn noontime.

Easy to breathe

In the chilly transparent air

Rare fleecy clouds

Sailing high, in the pale-blue heavens.

All environments asks

To be lost in deep meditation.

Sun is shining,

Rather than warming.

Pleasure is great,

Expose your face to its tender beams.

Someone would do it

With eyes slightly closed,

If he were able to tear himself off

From the flaming fall of the leaves.

Almost nobody is

Able to do this with eyes closed.

Furthermore, you're observing the scene

With eyes wide open.

You are taking in

The surrounding fall's beauty,

As you'd like to keep

This beauty forever, and ever.

Rare deciduous tree

Is already naked.

But every place around

Is snowed under--gold of all hues!

As the sea's waves mirror skies over them,

Heaps of fallen leaves mirror too

Still violent crowns' gold over them,

Of huge maples, and oaks, and chestnuts.

Even the evergreen spruces

Entirely harmonize

With bronze and reddish-brown necklace

Of most other deciduous trees
There is nothing around
That would disturb the silence,
But the leaves' rustling,
In the streets, passways, and lawns near the houses.

Among autumnal silence,
There's a deep feeling of natural sadness;
For parting with summer,
With summer gone.
And the playing leaves are crying out;
To be gathered right now, in bouquet,
And placed on a pedestal;
For being later a feast for the eyes,
A reminder of receded summer.

Who Suffers and Why?

By Sheng-Huey Yu

Pain is the weal in life
Pain is the suffering:
Prosper who Dharma loves.
Suffers who Dharma hates.

Who hath bad men as friends,
Nor maketh friends with good
Who chooseth men's bad ways:
A source of suffering that.

When man loves company,
And sleep when he is lax
And slack and known for wrath:
A source of suffering that.

Who being rich supports
Not parents in their age
When gone is all their youths:
A source of suffering that.

When man of wealth and means
Of gold and property
Enjoys its sweets alone:
A source of suffering that.

When man is proud of birth

And purse and family,
And yet ashamed of kin:
A source of suffering that.

When on woman dates
On drink and dice alike
All of his savings wastes:
A source of suffering that.

Who not content with his
Is seen with others' wives,
Is seen with harlots too:
A source of suffering that.

When born of noble clan
A man is poor and craves
For much and longs to rule:
A source of suffering that.

When man, passed youth, doth wed
A maid with rounded breasts,
Not sleeps for jealousy:
A source of suffering that.

These sufferings in the world
The wise discern, and blest
With vision Aryan.
They seek the world of bliss.

Lovely Grandchild's Vignettes

by Efim Miller

At my table I sat more than half of the night,
Reading Katy's Vignettes, memoirs,
Making comments on them;
For her class presentation. She is bright.

All these responds, teachers wanted,
Her parents supposed were to do.
But they didn't so far. They are really busy.
Instead, I was called to "do them a favour."

So, I did it. With pleasure, of course.
Although I was tired enough,

After classes, and work, and so forth.
For Katy is my lovely grandchild.

After all, I enjoyed her vignettes, memoirs.
They all seemed to me nice, fascinating, and funny.
And what's more, I learned much new of her Self,
Memorizing her past, understanding better her present.

My Identity

by Efim Miller

A person's identity, I think, consists of what he looks like outwardly, and what he is like. What about me? I am a man of slightly more than average stature (5' 8") and moderate weight (160 lbs). I'm almost narrow shouldered and narrow necked, with comparatively thin extremities. So, I couldn't at all be considered as a fat one. My small palm with long fingers would do rather for a musician than for someone else. However, my hand clasp is firm, showing a sure hand, and friendly attitude to people. I've a slightly oblong face with deeply-seating blue smiling eyes flanked with scattering crow's feet on either side, and a somewhat wrinkled forehead, which is owing to my habit of screwing up my eyes and meditating. Two deep wrinkles descend from the nose's wings to the corners of the small mouth which utters, however, a steady and loud voice. My thinning gray hair bears no resemblance to my once auburn brown curls.

I really do not know, why such an ordinary face, like mine, commands trust. Nevertheless, the truth is that I have never betrayed somebody's trust to give me credit.

I'm a senior citizen (over sixty-eight). However, I am positive that age is rather a state of the soul than a passport category. When I was younger, I looked older than I was. Now, I look younger than I am, people say. I feel like I am really beyond age. It might be owing to regular exercising, but mostly, as I am convinced, to my inner balanced state of mind.

From the other hand, what I'm like, might tell, in short, my Jewish name Chaim, which means "life" in English. In fact, I inherited my great grandmother's name, transformed for me from female-version Chaya, together with her high spirit. Therefore, I really like my not official Jewish name, because it is like the real meal, optimistic, and with love of the surrounding world, to other people.

My past life in a country with lack of human rights has prepared me for any new and difficult situations, to fight for my own rights. Now, when I get known that America is a big country with both great opportunities and great problems, nothing frustrates me, however. As usual, I am highly motivated, open-minded and willing to acquire the patterns of the new culture as fast as possible. Therefore, I am so enthusiastic in everything that I am doing. I know exactly that I must be prepared to search and find my own niche in the highly competitive society, in spite of my age. I am on my own way. And, I think, I am doing my best.

Worthless on Bourbon Street

by
Melek Dunn

It was a full moon, and it was in my sign, Sagittarius, the astrological sign of the wanderer, and I was walking to the Greyhound bus station in New Orleans, Louisiana. I had lived there for about six months this time, and a year once before, but I knew this time I would never return and call this place home. For no reason other than sheer disappointment and a broken fool's heart. The two times I had lived there were nothing short of misery, and the last time was enough times. I knew the city very well after the second time and had decided that the people, culture and spirit which dwelled within it were not cut from blessed stones, they were made from the remains of evil ruins.

So as I walked from the Marigny, through the French Quarter, and to the downtown financial district, I made a few stops to sort of eternalize the life that was lived. My first stop was at a bar called Good Friends, where they sold freezes; one part chocolate shake, the other Everclear and Kahlua. There I looked around and saw all the same faces that I had seen for the past six months, imbibing themselves as usual. Yup! It was time to move on, but not without this drink, that much was worth hanging around for another ten minutes. I can remember the way I felt as if I still felt that way now, the feeling of being vacant, the feeling of longing for a meaning, the feeling of dragging a two ton boulder with the rope tied to my heart. With this feeling I moved on walking through the Quarter, pelted by the spare changers, the gutter punks, and I can't forget the tap dancing ten year old black boys who should have been in school. The streets of New Orleans held a dirty tainted look, they appeared to be right out of a Biblical damning session. The locals would hustle for a dime, and the tourists would revel in this carnival style reality, for all of its mystique. Me, though, had seen enough of this lifestyle.

"I can remember the way I felt, as if I still felt that way now, the feeling of being vacant, the feeling of longing for a meaning, the feeling of dragging a two ton boulder with the rope tied to my heart."

I remember an acquaintance of mine. His name was Wessley, a young man with his parents' support as long as he stayed in school. Wessley stayed in school, he only took about two classes a semester, and spent the rest of his time doing "Ruffies," a muscle relaxer. I can't judge this drug habit of his though, the muscle relaxers probably made it easier to take the beatings his alcoholic boyfriend gave him regularly. Wessley never had enough time for any one who might be beneficial to his life. He only had time for abuse. These things were all too common, and I could not deal with it anymore. The

day that I was thinking about moving, I went over to his house to talk and maybe get a consoling word for my confusion, he leaned over his French Quarter apartment's balcony and said:

"Not right now. I don't have the time for you!"

"What?" My mind was in shock. There I was, miserable, twenty years old, on my own, and now without a friend to lean on. No! That would not do. Earlier that day I had gone to see a new friend of mine named Gayland about an apartment that was cheaper than the one I was in, not to mention, away from my current roommate. I stopped by Gayland's house at about ten in the morning only to find him still asleep and half drunk, completely oblivious to the agreement we had made just the night before to go see the place and put down our security deposit. Gayland did not have any money nor did he know for certain where the place was, and how to get in touch with the landlord. The only thing he was certain of was he wanted to sleep with me, but he didn't even know how he was going to do that. Needless to say, he didn't. I left his fast fat ass right where I originally found it, worthless on Bourbon Street.

"Needless to say, he didn't. I left his fast fat ass right where I originally found it, worthless on Bourbon Street. Now two times in the same day I had been let down, so I decided to go home and take a nap."

Now two times in the same day I had been let down, so I decided to go on home and take a nap. As I slept, I started to have this weird dream. I was sitting in my room in a chair that faced the kitchen doorway and this entity came bouncing down. It blocked my bedroom doorway but from the kitchen, it stood there, in the kitchen, with menacing eyes fixed right on me and danced around never loosening its intense glare. This apparition held a sinister grin and with every passing second whispered tic-tock, tic-tock, tick-tock...., as if to say time is running out. When I looked over its shoulder I saw a second person pacing back and forth, with a mind calculating on what to do. This other person was my then roommate Raymond, who I had moved to New Orleans with in the first place, but in the dream he was certainly not appearing to be my friend. At that moment I awoke in absolute horror, because the eyes of the demon in my dreams, were so cold, so terrifying, that they stirred my heart into a frenzy, and left my skin drenched in cold sweat. I scratched my head, sat in a drone like state and said to myself outloud:

"Something is terribly wrong in my life." At that moment I heard keys in the door and in walked Raymond. He came into my room and asked when I was moving out

because his new friend Alex was going to move in. I told him I didn't know; I said I'm thinking about staying for a little while. My supposed friend who I had lived with for six months and supported for two, then sucked his teeth and exclaimed, "That sucks! That messes up my whole plan. Alex was supposed to move in. He doesn't have a place to stay."

I replied, "That doesn't mess up anything. You'll just have to wait." He then stormed out of my room and slammed the bathroom door as he went in. I could not believe this. After six months of being roommates and even longer of being friends, I was easily reduced in his mind to an obstacle in his greater scheme of things. Never was I involved with him as more than friends. Maybe he was bitter from unrequited love, but whatever the reason I felt for myself that I deserved a little bit more than "That sucks." He still owes me back rent to this day, but on that day his obligation to me was none.

"Yes, that day's events were enough to tell me I needed a change, and as the rage built within me, I knew I had all the power in the world to change."

There I sat in confusion and uncertainty about the life I had before me and behind. and the one who was supposed to be concerned most about me only cared about his new boyfriend Alex. Who has since dumped him for being too inconsiderate and controlling.

Yes, that day's events were enough to tell me I needed a change, and as the rage built within me, I knew I had all the power in the world to change.

Raymond took a nap, and I got up, packed my tapes my underwear and a couple of books, took all the rent money out of the "Rent box," which only I had saved for, and left 2220 Dauphine Street. I walked on down the street and into the French Quarter, where I had my freeze, in the same bar where I actually saw Lenny Kravitz play pool, and kept on going. I stopped at this place called Oz, and this place called Candice's on Conti. had a Daiquiri and a beer and still kept walking. When I was just about two blocks from the Greyhound bus depot I leaned on a mail box and realized exactly how let down I was. Enough to keep going on and buy my Greyhound back to Boston.

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